



## NEWS & VIEWS

January 9, 2020 | 12 Tevet 5780

Blog & Events Issue

# 70 FACES OF TORAH

Posts from this [Hebrew College-hosted blog](#) are published weekly in [Patheos](#).

## Hindsight is 2020

*Parashat Vayechi (Genesis 47:28-50:26)*

By Rabbi Shira Shazeer, Rab`10  
Rabbi, Metrowest Jewish Day School in Framingham, MA



This Shabbat, we complete the first full week of the new secular decade. The beginning of the year 2020 has inspired many to look back over the last 10, 20, or more years, reflecting on the changes we have seen in our personal lives and in the world at large, to speculate on where the decades to come will take us, and how we will shape the future for ourselves, our children, and the world. Reaching the end of *Sefer Beresheet*, the book of Genesis, we find Jacob in a similar mindset.

As *Parshat Vayechi* begins, Jacob has come to the completion of 17 years in Egypt. He has now lived as long as a guest under the protection of his son Joseph, Pharaoh's second-in-command, as his time protecting Joseph as a child, his favorite son. Like the turn of the decade we face today, this moment for Jacob calls for reflection and construction of meaning.

Jacob senses that his life is coming to an end, and we see him looking back at the unexpected turns his life has taken, both good and bad, and looking forward to the legacy he will leave behind. Jacob is dying far from the land that he planned to pass down to his children, and with limited time and limited authority to direct the future proceedings of his family's fulfillment of their destiny.

[Read more](#)

# COMMUNITY LEARNING

## "Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire"

By Jacob Meskin, PhD  
Instructor, [Hebrew College Me'ah Programs](#)



Whenever I try to explain what I do for a living, I get odd looks. I taught for many years in academia, and still do from time to time. But when I say I teach adults in a non-religious program that explores all the different aspects of Judaism, and that I do this more or less full-time, most folks look a bit embarrassed. They inevitably ask, "But how does the program get folks to join? If it's not for an academic degree, why would they want to take the courses?"

I always search for a way to explain the counterintuitive reality: [Hebrew College's Me'ah](#) classes are exciting. I know this can sound strange, or like a joke, but it's the truth. My job has two parts. First of all, I have to do all the necessary academic research. But then I have to figure out how to get students to grasp viscerally the real-life issues, the compelling ideas, the battles, the stories of passionate men and women who dedicated – and often sacrificed – their lives for different sorts of Judaic visions. For Me'ah classes to work, they have to satisfy the poet William Butler Yeats' definition: "Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire." In other words, what we are studying has to really matter, for us right now. And of course, I know how lucky I am to have engaged students who help make class discussions and debates so energetic – and often, so moving.

[Read more](#)

## Take Jacob Meskin's Me'ah Select Class

This winter/spring, Jacob Meskin will teach the [Me'ah Select classes](#) "Unpacking Antisemitism: Religious Origins, Modern Forms, and Contemporary Dynamics" and "The Modern Jewish Experience Through the Lens of Short Stories" at Hebrew College, beginning February 5 and 6 respectively. The class "Values in Practice: The Jewish Holidays in Jewish Law and Custom" with Rabbi Benji Samuels will also be offered on Tuesdays at Hebrew College, beginning Feb. 25.



[Learn more & register](#)

# EVENTS

# 1

## April 29, 2020

Save the Date

*Leadership, Learning, and Love*

Hebrew College Spring Event  
6:30 pm at Temple Israel, Boston

Details coming soon!

### JANUARY

**Azamra: Alternative Shabbat Community Minyan**

*With Rabbi Lev Friedman, Rab`18. Supported by the [Hebrew College Innovation Lab](#).*

January 25 | 10 am - 12 pm  
Hebrew College Beit Midrash  
[Learn more](#)

**Ownership, Access, and the Question of Belonging: Towards a Just Land Ethic in America**

*A discussion with Leah Penniman, co-director and farm manager of Soul Fire Farm.*

January 27 | 2 - 4 pm  
Hebrew College  
[Learn more](#)

**Investing for Equity: A Conversation with Aliana Pineiro**

*Aliana Pinerio is Impact Director for the BII Fund.*

January 28 | 1:15 - 2:30 pm  
Hebrew College  
[Learn more](#)

**Income Inequality & The Problem of Inheritance**

### FEBRUARY

**Azamra: Alternative Shabbat Community Minyan**

*With Rabbi Lev Friedman, Rab`18.*

February 22 | 10 am - 12 pm  
Hebrew College Beit Midrash  
[Learn more](#)

**February Yom Iyyun: Teen Mental Health**

*Offered thanks to generous support from The Ruderman Family Foundation.*

February 26 | 9 am - 3:30 pm  
Hebrew College  
[Learn more](#)

### MARCH

**Seeing Torah Gallery Opening**

*"Seeing Torah" is a visual diary documenting artist Anita Rabinoff-Goldman's study and artistic response to each of the 54 portions of the Torah over the cycle of a single Jewish year.*

March 24 | 6 pm  
Hebrew College  
[Learn more](#)

*Schulman of Resource Generation; and Rabbinical  
School of Hebrew College Dean Rabbi Dan Judson.*

January 28 | 7:15 pm  
Hebrew College  
[Learn more & RSVP](#)



Hebrew College | 160 Herrick Road | Newton Centre, MA 02459  
617.559.8600 | [hebrewcollege.edu](http://hebrewcollege.edu) | [Donate](#)